DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 229 CE 036 981

AUTHOR Peterson, Karen L.
TITLE The WIQ: A Multi-Dimensional Instrument to Assess Antecedents of Women's Vocational Choice.
PUB DATE [83]
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; College Students; Decision Making; *Females; Higher Education; *Interest Inventories; *Multivariate Analysis; Occupational Aspiration; *Predictor Variables; Test Construction; Test Validity; *Vocational Interests
IDENTIFIERS *Work Interest Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

A study identified the variables affecting the vocational choice of college women. During the research project, a 97-item instrument entitled the Work Interest Questionnaire (WIQ) was developed and administered to 437 undergraduate female students enrolled at a large Midwestern university. The subjects were selected based on their varying fields of interest (science versus nonscience disciplines and applied versus theoretical orientations). By subjecting the results of the questionnaires to a factor analysis, the researcher identified the following six items as significant in assessing the variables influencing vocational choice: work autonomy, family-work flexibility, parent considerations, work incentives, promotion and esteem, and parental expectations. Because none of these factors was a significant predictor of career orientation when considered exclusively, it was concluded that the variables affecting the decision-making process of vocational choice can be accurately ascertained only through the use of a multi-dimensional instrument such as the WIQ. (The WIQ instrument is not included in this report.) (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED234229

The WIQ: A Multi-Dimensional Instrument to Assess Antecedents of Women's Vocational Choice

Karen L. Peterson[1]

Central Michigan University

Running Head: WIQ

CE036981

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K Peterson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present investigation was to assess antecedents of vocational choice of college women. A multi-dimensional instrument was developed and administered with responses subjected to factor analysis. Results revealed six factors to be of significance in assessing variables influencing vocational choice. Findings and implications for future research were discussed.

The involvement of women in the labor force has risen dramatically during the past two decades. Despite their growing numbers, however, little systematic research has been conducted to assess women's vocational development especially with regard to antecedent variables. Although the majority of studies which have been conducted on women have focused primarily on differences between career and homemaker orientations (Astin & Myint, 1971; Bardwick, 1971; Harmon, 1970; Oliver, 1974, Richardson, 1975). What remains of concern to many in the field of vocational development is the assessment of variables which influence the career direction of young women who have definite vocational and work preferences. The assessment of such antecedent and situational factors are important determinants of women's career orientations and would significantly improve the opportunity for providing supportative and definitive counseling for women in the initial phases of career decision making.

In order to accurately assess variables affecting women's vocational choice it has been suggested that an instrument designed to measure varying aspects be utilized. This position is in keeping with that taken by a number of researchers who have suggested women have patterns of vocational development different from men (Hansen & Rapoza, 1978; Osipow, 1975; Yuen, Tinsley & Tinsley, 1980; Sytowski, 1969). It would appear to be of value to examine factors presently of concern to women in the process of decision making, and to incorporate items focusing on future and/or expected conditions of work involvement. The measurement of these influences would provide clarification of the interplay between antecedent, situational, and future expectations which significantly influence the women's vocational decisions.

METHOD

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of the present investigation was to isolate and identify variables affecting the vocational choice of college women. Of secondary importance was the development of a valid and reliable multi-dimensional instrument used to determine the interest of women involved in vocational decision-making. It was felt that the assessment of antecedent variables could provide information and insights into those specific factors which strongly influence young women's career decision-making patterns.

Instrument construction and design

The multi-dimensional approach, now more widely used for assessing antecedents of vocational choice for women (Psathas, 1968; Zytowski, 1969), necessitated the formation of an instrument which encompassed several dimensions. The paper and pencil questionnaire developed for use in the present study contained five distinct sections: Demographics; Reasons for Selection of Major (course of study in college); Career Considerations (items reflecting parental expectations and degree of career salience); Future Role Expectations (items reflecting degree of work commitment and projected sex-role functions); and Work Components (work values). All of the items (excluding demographics) were chosen for inclusion in the instrument based on their relevance for assessing components considered important to vocational choice for women (Austin & Austin, 1981; Garbin & Stover, 1979; Greenhaus, 1971; Harmon, 1970; Kievit, 1972; Pryor, 1979; Trigg & Perlman, 1976; Tangri, 1972; Zytowski, 1969; 1970).

The instrument, entitled "Work Interest Questionnaire (WIQ)" consisted of a total of 97 items. Respondents were asked to rate each item as to its degree of importance using a 1-99 point Likert-type scale. A score of "1" indicated the item was not descriptive of their views, while a score of "99" indicated the item was very representative of their position. A midpoint score of "55" was used if respondents were unsure how important the item was for them.

Participants

Subjects chosen for inclusion in the study were 437 undergraduate female students enrolled at a large Midwestern university. Subjects were of junior and senior standing and had major areas of study in the following disciplines: Child Development (N=102); Food and Nutrition (N=114); the Social Sciences (sociology and psychology) (N=109); and the Biological Sciences (biology, botany, zoology, pre-medical and veterinary studies) (N=106). Subjects were selected based on their varying fields of study (science vs. non-science disciplines and applied vs. theoretical orientations). In order to determine the validity of the variables used to assess the vocational preferences of these subjects it was deemed necessary to include only individuals who had officially declared their areas of study.

Methods of data analyses

In order to attest to the validity of including items from each of the four theoretical domains (e.g., Reasons for Selection of Major; Career Considerations; Future Role Expectations; Work Components) of the WIQ; and to provide a basis for revision of the existing 97 item questionnaire to a

more compact assessment device, factor analysis was selected as the appropriate statistical technique. Factor analysis provided a technique for: 1) parsimoniously analyzing the scores on the theoretical dimensions thus testing the hypothesis regarding the structuring of variables in terms of expected numbers of significant factors; and (2) for use in exploring and detecting any patterning of combined variables. Pooled total group responses were used for the factor analysis with interactive least square analyses performed on each of the 97 items of the WIQ. A correlation matrix was used for the initial rotation and this was followed by a Procrustes (Varimax) rotation (Wherry, 1959). Negative loadings obtained in each of the six factors were an artifact of the analysis and were reversed when appropriate, thus reflecting the dimensions obtaining positive loadings.

RESULTS

As a result of these rotations six factors were identified, the factors which appeared to provide an adequate description of the interrelatedness of variables were entitled: Work Autonomy; Family-Work Flexibility; Parental Consideration; Work Incentives; Promotion and Esteem; and Parental Expectations.

The items which loaded significantly on each of these factors are listed in Table 1. Factor A, labeled "Work Autonomy", is the strongest of the six identified factors. This factor contains items which describe work characteristics of original thinking, intellectual stimulation, decision-making, personal expression, and activity. All items appear

related to careers selected because of their anticipated fostering of expression, involvement, stimulation, and as the factor title denotes, autonomy.

Factor B, entitled "Family-Work Flexibility", (see Table 1) includes a mixture of items from different sections of the WIQ (Reasons for Selection of Major and Career Considerations). This factor depicts the combining of projected family responsibilities with work involvement on a flexible time schedule. In combination, these items attest to the influence of considering family responsibilities with regard to the initial selection of a major area of academic study.

Table 1 also presents item loadings for Factor C, entitled "Parental Considerations". This factor contains items from the Career Considerations section of the WIQ and is concerned with parental influences on subjects' selection of a major. Parental influence is manifested through parental satisfaction with their daughter's field of study and the work opportunities which may result from the selection of her chosen major.

Factor D, "Work Incentives", (see Table 1) describes the conditions under which women would work outside the home for pay given the opportunity for elective employment. This factor contains items which are valued incentives of opportunity for personal growth and fulfillment, expanding personal relationships, financial return, and service to society. Items included in this factor are contained exclusively within the Future Role Expectations section of the WIQ.

Work value items of "status" and "getting ahead" were grouped in Factor E (see Table 1) labeled as "Promotion and Esteem". These items

involve the seeking of status and achievement and appear as separate from those items loading in factor A, but represented another combination of Work Components (work values) considered important.

The final factor was labeled "Parental Expectations" (see Table 1). Items in this factor describe parental expectations for their daughter to marry and have children. The two primary items describing this factor were derived exclusively from the WIQ section containing Career Consideration variables.

DISCUSSION

The factor analysis conducted on the 97 WIQ items resulted in the formation of six distinct factors. Items from each of the four sections of the WIQ (Reasons for: Selection of Major; Career Considerations; Future Role Expectations; and Work Components) were found to load within these six factors. Such loading provides support for the original inclusion of these four theoretical domains (sections) in the instrument designed to assess multiple variables affecting vocational choice in women.

In reviewing these six factors three major dimensions of vocational development seem to emerge. The first is that of parental influence which includes the factors of Parental Considerations (Factor C) and Parental Expectations (Factor F). Second is a dimension of job flexibility and incentive which includes Factor B (Family-Work Flexibility) and D (Work Incentives). The third dimension of work values includes the two factors concerned with work components, Factor A (Work Autonomy) and Factor E (Promotion and Esteem). While the aspect of parental influence may not be found to be of importance for women in established careers, the continued

appearance of this variable with regard to the vocational decision-making of young women is significant. In addition, while a number of work values appear as important vocational choice variables, they are apparently most significant when combined with an opportunity for job/family flexibility. These three dimensions not only provide support for the justification of a multi-dimensional approach for assessing vocational choice but also reflect the traditional conflict of occupational choice for women: career interest versus family expectations and perceived responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

The complex interplay between parental expectations, personal values, work and role expectations illustrate the need for a multi-dimensional instrument, such as the WIQ, to assess the processes and influences involved in women's vocational choices. It appears that none of these dimensions was a significant predictor of career orientation when considered exclusively but were reliable determinants when viewed in combination. It is suggested from this research, that only through the use of a multi-dimensional instrument can variables affecting the decision making process of vocational choice be accurately ascertained. In addition, the conceptualizing of women's career decision-making behavior would best be explored in the context of a theoretical perspective which focused on the unique pattern's of women's vocational needs. In light of the results obtained in the present study recommendations for future research include the following: continued revision of the WIQ; comparison of individual groups of subjects on items similar to those included in the WIQ; investigation of the stability over time of Career Consideration factors and Future Role Expectation variables, and

investigation of individual career patterns of women who appear to have similar vocational interest but who select varying types of work involvements. The implications for researchers and counselors is that of considering the effects of past, immediate (situational) and expected factors as they in combination affect the vocational decisions of women in the process of determining career direction and as they continue to influence vocational involvements over the entire time of work involvement.

REFERENCES

Astin, H. S. & Myint, T. (1971), Career development and stability of young women during the post-high school years. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 18, 369-394.

Astin, C. J. & Astin, D. (1981), Factors influencing women's choice of nontraditional careers: The role of family, peers, and counselors. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 29, 253-263.

Bardwick, J. M. (1971), Psychology of women. New York: Harper & Row.

Garbin, A. F. & Stover, R. G. (1980), Vocational behavior and career development, 1979: A Review. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 17, 125-170.

Greenhaus, J. H. (1971), An investigation of the role of career salience in vocational behavior. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 1, 209-216.

Hansen, L. S. & Rapoza, R. S. (Eds.) (1978), Career development and counseling of women. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Harmon, L. W. (1970), Anatomy of career committment in women. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 17, 77-80.

Kievit, M. B. (1972), Review and Synthesis of Research on Women in the World of Work. Columbus, Ohio: Center for Vocational Education, Ohio State University, March, ERIC Clearinghouse on Vocational and Technical Education (VT 014 690).

Oliver, L. W. (1974), Attachment and affiliation motivation in career-oriented and homemaking-oriented college women. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 4, 275-281.

Osipow, S. H. (Ed.),(1975), Emerging women: Career analysis and outlook. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Pryor, R. (1979), In search of a concept: Work values. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27, 250-258.

Psathas, G. (1968), Toward a theory of occupational choice for women. Sociology and Social Research, 52, 253-268.

Richardson, M. S. (1975), Self-concepts and role concepts in the career orientation of college women. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 13, 327-337.

Tangri, S. S. (1972), Determinants of occupational role innovation among college women. Journal of Social Forces, 28, 177-199.

Trigg, L. J. & Perlman, D. (1976), Social influences on women's pursuit of a nontraditional career. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 1, 138-150.

Yuen, R. K., Tinsley, D. J., & Tinsley, H. E. A. (1980), The vocational needs and background characteristics of homemaker-oriented women and career-oriented women. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 28, 150-156.

Zytowski, D. G. (1969), Toward a theory of career development of women. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 47, 660-664.

Zytowski, D. G. (1970), The concept of work values. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 18, 176-187.

FOOTNOTE

[1]The author would like to express her appreciation to Dr. Sam Clark, Iowa State University, for his assistance in conducting the reported investigation and to Dr. Bruce Roscoe, Central Michigan University, for his editorial assistance in preparation of this manuscript.

Table 1: Factors A-F and Pooled Factor Loadings for Individual Items for the WIQ

WIQ Items	Factor Loadings (pooled)
Factor A: Work Autonomy	
Creativity: work which requires original thinking	.59
Active Work: work which requires energy in physical activity	.65
Learning: work which provides intellectual stimulation	.63
Independence: work which allows opportunity to decide how to get the job done	.57
Expression: work which provides the opportunity for personal opinions	.56
Factor B: Family-Work Flexibility	
Occupations: I can enter from the major allow for re-entry at a later time if I should need to work after a period of time out of the work force	.57
Occupations: I can enter from the major will combine well with marriage and/or family life	.67
The major prepares me for marriage and/or family life	.54
Factor C: Parental Considerations	
My parent(s) are satisfied with my present major	.75
My parent(s) want me to change major they think would be more worthwhile	-.78
My parent(s) want me to change majors they think would be more prestigious	-.73
My parent(s) are satisfied with the type of work I will be able to do when I graduate with my present major	.71
Factor D: Work Incentives	
I would work outside the home for pay if it provided for some "extras" in life	.68
I would work outside the home for pay if it provided me an opportunity for personal growth	.59
I would work outside the home for pay if it provided me an opportunity for service to society by using my education	.42
I would work outside the home for pay if it gave me satisfaction to see financial return on my educational investment	.66
I would work outside the home for pay if it provided me an opportunity for expanding my circle of personal relationships	.61
Factor E: Promotion and Esteem	
Status: work which provides me with the esteem of others	.59
Getting Ahead: work which provides me opportunities for promotion to higher levels	.60
Factor F: Parental Expectations for Daughter's Family Establishment	
My parent(s) wanted me to marry	.68
My parent(s) want me to have a family	.78